



# NEWSLETTER

**SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS**

**SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF THE MILITARY**



## HONORING NATIVE AMERICAN HERITAGE

Message from SDDVA Secretary Whitlock --

Traditionally, October and November have been two months that South Dakota celebrates and honors Native American heritage.

During that time, we have many opportunities to celebrate the rich and diverse cultures, traditions, and histories, and to acknowledge the important contributions, achievements, and sacrifices of Native people.

Many Americans know the story of the Code Talkers during World War II. But did you know that Native American servicemembers have fought for our nation in every war since our Founding?

South Dakota is fortunate to have eight tribal veterans service officers located in Eagle Butte, Fort Thompson, Lower Brule, Pine Ridge, Rosebud, Agency Village, Wagner and on the Standing Rock Reservation. They stand ready to aid veterans in transition from a warrior's journey to civilian life through readjustment assistance, strengthening family ties, obtaining veterans benefits, links to mental health and wellness services, and career and educational training.

Code talkers played a pivotal role in past successful U.S. war efforts. It is important that we honor and highlight the memories of what they accomplished and ensure this history is not forgotten. Their code saved lives and gave the military a way to secretly convey its battle plans on America's way to victory.

And for those soldiers who have fallen, we honor their service and sacrifice at four Native American Veterans Cemeteries. One each in Pine Ridge, White River, Sisseton, and McLaughlin.

Let us keep the flame of the soldiers' dreams alive; let us preserve the cultures and traditions in this land of the free and home of the brave. God bless those who serve and have served in uniform, and God bless this wonderful country of ours.

SDNG Recognized Nationally.....	2
New CVSOs/SDDVA Outreach .....	3
SDCHAP .....	4
Nyberg Ace Round Up .....	5
VA CWT Program.....	6
VHA Leadership Selection .....	7
VA/USD Research Project.....	8
USD Football Military Game .....	9
USD Women's Basketball Military Appreciation Night .....	10
USD Men's Basketball Military Appreciation Game .....	11
Upcoming Events.....	12

# **SD ARMY NATIONAL GUARD BATTALION RECEIVES NATIONAL AWARD**

For the second year in a row, the South Dakota National Guard's 152nd Combat Sustainment Support Battalion has received the Gen. Walter T. Kerwin, Jr. Readiness Award for excellence.

The Brookings-based 152nd was announced as the recipient of the Kerwin award for 2020, which recognizes the most outstanding Army National Guard battalion in the nation for achieving the highest standards in training and readiness.

The national award is presented jointly on behalf of the National Guard Association of the United States, the Association of the U.S. Army, and the Reserve Officers Association. This is the third time in four years the 152nd has received this award, and it is the fourth straight year a SDNG battalion has won the award.

The 152nd CSSB provides multifunctional logistics and support operations for U.S. forces, as well as provides command and control, administrative, logistics and training support for nearly 600 soldiers in four assigned units and detachments located in six communities throughout South Dakota. The Kerwin award also reflects the state of readiness of the battalion's subordinate companies, which include the 1742nd Transportation Company (Sioux Falls, Flandreau), 740th Transportation Company (Milbank, Aberdeen), 665th Support Maintenance Company (Mitchell), and 730th Area Support Medical Company (Vermillion).

Recipients of the Kerwin award demonstrate excellence in operational planning, execution of training and maintaining high readiness standards above all other Army National Guard units for the training year. Evaluation criteria for the award include the areas of assigned personnel strength, percentage of personnel qualified in their duty position, attendance at monthly drill weekends and annual training, individual weapons qualification and physical fitness test scores, as well as an effective maintenance program.

The Kerwin award was named for retired Gen. Walter T. Kerwin, Jr., who served as the first commander of United States Forces Command and also as Vice Chief of Staff of the U.S. Army from 1974 to 1978. Kerwin was a strong advocate of the "One Army," or "Total Army" concept that recognized the important role of the National Guard and U. S. Army Reserve. The plans and programs he set in motion resulted in a significant improvement in the readiness of reserve components.



## NEW CVSOS NAMED

Union County and Lake County Commissions have named new county veterans service officers.

Wade Tompkins has been named the new Union County Veterans Service Officer. He can be reached at: [ucvets@unioncountysd.org](mailto:ucvets@unioncountysd.org).

Matt Pillar has been named the new Lake County Veterans Service Officer. He can be reached at: [lakevso@lake.sd.gov](mailto:lakevso@lake.sd.gov).

## SDDVA OUTREACH EVENTS

Last Friday, SDDVA's Guy Arnold and Charles Mix County Veterans Service Officer Jerry Seiner hosted an information booth at the Operation Chow Line in Wagner. Eleven vendors provided information to over 150 veterans and family members. Attendees were afforded a hot breakfast and food cards were provided to those in need.

SDDVA State Veterans Service Officer Shannon Phillips hosted an outreach booth for the Department at the South Dakota Women Veterans Alliance in Sioux Falls last Saturday.

This new program was designed to recognize and support strong women in the military.



The guest speaker was well-known female veteran, Carey Lohrenz. She was the first female F-14 Tomcat Fighter Pilot in the U.S. Navy.



# MESSAGE FROM SD HOUSING DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

The South Dakota Housing Development Authority is encouraging those in need to take advantage of the historic funding from SD CARES Housing Assistance Program. This emergency rental assistance is geared to help those having trouble paying their rent, mortgage, and utilities.



Recently, Treasury provided funding to assist South Dakota residents with emergency housing assistance. If you have been financially impacted due to COVID-19, the SD CARES Housing Assistance Program (SDCHAP) may provide temporary mortgage, rent and/or utility assistance.

Assistance provided is not a loan and does not have to be paid back. Payment is made directly to the mortgage servicer, landlord or utility provider on the applicant's behalf. Funding amount is based on need.

Funds can be used to cover rent, rental arrears, utilities, utility arrears, mortgage payments and mortgage delinquency, from March 13, 2020 to present.

## DO I QUALIFY?

- ☒ Be a renter or homeowner;
- ☒ Have income at or below 80% of AMI (Renters) or 100% of AMI (Homeowners) for your respective county;
- ☒ Be financially impacted – directly or indirectly – by Covid-19;
- ☒ Owe past due mortgage, rent or utilities or unable to pay current housing expenses

## AGENCIES PARTICIPATING

- ☒ Helpline Center
- ☒ Codington County Welfare
- ☒ Grow South Dakota
- ☒ Inter-Lakes Community Action Partnership
- ☒ Lakota Funds
- ☒ Lutheran Social Services
- ☒ Mazaska Owecaso Otipi Financial
- ☒ NeighborWorks Dakota Home Resources
- ☒ Pennington County Health & Human Services
- ☒ Rural Office of Community Services, Inc.
- ☒ Western SD Community Action
- ☒ South Dakota Housing Development Authority

## HOW TO APPLY

- ☒ Apply today:  
[sdcareshousingassistance.com](https://sdcareshousingassistance.com)
- Verify eligibility requirements and begin the application process.

## DOCUMENTATION NEEDED

- ☒ Photo ID (Driver's License or State/Tribally Issued ID)
- ☒ Copy of current agreements and your past due bills
- ☒ Proof of Income
- ☒ Documentation proving COVID-19 related financial hardship
- ☒ Other if requested



## HAVE QUESTIONS:

Helpline Center @ 211 | SDHDA @ 800.540.4241



# NYBERG'S ROUND UP PROGRAM TO BENEFIT ALLIANCE

## **Nyberg's ACE Round-Up:**

Round-up at checkout and help support the mission of the Alliance - October 18th through Veterans Day at all 5 Sioux Falls locations. They only do a select few Round-Ups like this throughout the year and have selected the Alliance this year. Your round-up will help the Alliance help veterans, active military and the community.

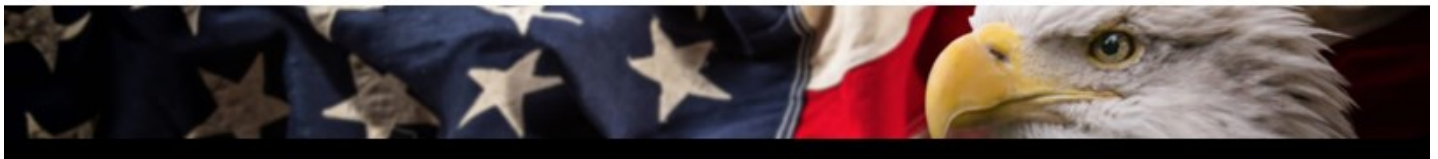
41<sup>st</sup> & Minnesota

12<sup>th</sup> & Kiwanis

10<sup>th</sup> & Sycamore

41<sup>st</sup> & Sertoma

Downtown- 1<sup>st</sup> Ave.& 12<sup>th</sup> Street



*the* **ALLIANCE**  
South Dakota Military Heritage Alliance, Inc.

**Address:** 1600 W. Russell St.  
Sioux Falls, SD 57104  
**Phone:** 605.271.1582

# VA PUSHES FOR EMPLOYMENT INCLUSIVITY DURING COMPENSATED WORK THERAPY VOCATION REHABILITATION WEEK

In recognition of [National Disability Employment Awareness Month](#), the United States Department of Veterans Affairs is observing Compensated Work Therapy Vocational Rehabilitation Week, Oct. 17-21 at its facilities nationwide as part of its efforts to increase employment inclusivity and vocational rehabilitation services for veterans with disabilities.

The services provided through the [CWT program](#) are integrated with clinical care to assist veterans with serious mental illness, Post-traumatic Stress Disorder, polytrauma and traumatic brain injury, substance use disorder, homelessness, and other psychosocial issues that may interfere with securing meaningful employment.

"The core philosophy of compensated work therapy is that given the right support, all persons with a disability can contribute productively to the workforce," said National Director of Veterans Health Administration Vocational Rehabilitation Service Shana K. Bakken, Ph.D. "VHA's vocational rehabilitation teams are working to ensure every veteran who has a goal of employment has the opportunity to make a worthwhile contribution in their local communities through meaningful work."

Veteran and VA File Clerk Mike Onrubia credits VA Vocational Rehabilitation Specialist Holly Starks with helping him get a job at the Hampton VA Healthcare System which he says helped turn his life around.

"I applied for the file clerk/scanner position at Hampton VA and started work the day after Labor Day and I love my job," said Onrubia. "For the first time in over a decade, I feel like I can work toward my dream of working as a social worker and then a psychologist, helping out my fellow veterans and giving them hope like Ms. Starks did for me. My daughter is in school and I look forward to going back myself, all thanks to Ms. Holly Starks."

This is an example of how VA's integrated care positively affects a veteran's whole well-being, to include financial independence.

Often, individuals with disabilities have been placed in sheltered workshops and sheltered employment, which may separate them from workers in the general population. In August, the VA discontinued operations of prevocational programs, including sheltered workshops and programs that pay sub-minimum wage.

CWT programs are located at all VA health care systems across the nation and VA staff have developed partnerships with local, regional, and national businesses, industry, and government agencies to provide veteran candidates for employment.

The VA employs over 800 rehabilitation counselors, vocational rehabilitation specialists, managers, and peer support specialists who provide services to more than 52,000 veterans each year within the VA health care system.

# VA STANDS UP COMMISSION TO RECOMMEND NEW VETERANS HEALTH ADMINISTRATION UNDER SECRETARY

The United States Department of Veterans Affairs established a commission to identify candidates to lead and manage the Veterans Health Administration.

The position is for the Under Secretary for Health, who oversees the country's largest health care system — which has an approximate annual budget of \$61 billion — and supervises the delivery of care to more than nine million enrolled veterans.

Those being considered must have substantial experience in connection with the programs of VHA or programs of similar content and scope. By law, the appointment is made without regard to political affiliation and solely on demonstrated ability in the medical profession, policy formulation, health care administration and fiscal management.

Duties of the post include overseeing the operation of VA's more than 1,200 sites of care, including hospitals, community-based outpatient clinics, nursing homes, domiciliaries and 300 Vet Centers. The candidates should have a demonstrated ability to conceptualize and implement a vision, while being an advocate who can move an ambitious agenda forward to meet the needs of veterans.

VHA is the nation's largest provider of graduate medical education and a major contributor to medical and scientific research. More than 73,000 active volunteers, 123,000 health professions trainees, and 306,000 full-time, health-care professionals and support staff are an integral part of the VHA community.

To learn more about the position, visit: <https://www.usajobs.gov/GetJob/ViewDetails/617652300>.





# VA/USD RESEARCH STUDY

The VA and the University of South Dakota are conducting a five-year NIH funded study investigating stress and health behaviors in OEF/OIF/OND Vets.

Their hope is that this research will increase understanding of factors maintaining alcohol use disorder (AUD) and PTSD among veterans, an important public health concern. It will advance knowledge of regulatory processes underlying comorbid AUD and PTSD and associated problems with interpersonal functioning (e.g., violence). Whereas previous research has studied emotional and behavioral dysregulation as person-level correlates of PTSD and AUD, this study shifts the focus to advance knowledge of the temporal dynamics of these processes to identify time-varying precursors of health outcomes.

The study is **100% CONFIDENTIAL**. No information will be shared with the VA or entered into the veterans medical record.



## VA Research Study for OIF/OEF/OND Veterans



Investigators: Drs. Jeffrey Simons, Raluca Simons, and Pat Ronan

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b><u>What:</u></b> Study of stress and health behaviors</li> <li>• <b><u>Where:</u></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Sioux Falls VA</li> <li>- University of South Dakota – Vermillion</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b><u>You need to be:</u></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Between the ages of 18 and 60 years old</li> <li>- Have been deployed to Iraq or Afghanistan</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b><u>The study will involve 22 visits over a period of 2 years</u></b></li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b><u>If you participate you will receive:</u></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Opportunity to assist future veterans by participating in research aimed at improving veteran health.</li> <li>- Compensation for your time and travel may include \$50 for completing a baseline assessment, \$50 for each of 10 in office assessments, and up to \$135/week for each of 17 self-monitoring weeks completed, depending on number of completed assessments (up to ~2500)</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |
|---|--|

**For more information please contact:**

The research team at (605) 658-3730, or email  
hbr@usd.edu, raluca.simons@usd.edu, or patrick.ronan@va.gov

# ***COYOTE FOOTBALL MILITARY APPRECIATION DAY***

***Saturday, October 23 at 1 p.m. - DakotaDome***



***VS.***



- Two FREE Tickets for All Active Military Members and Veterans***
- Discounted \$10 Tickets for Family Members***
- In-Game Recognition***
- Call the Coyote Ticket Office at 605-677-5959 to Redeem this Offer or GoVotes.com/Promo and enter the promo code FLAG***

# ***COYOTE WOMEN'S BASKETBALL MILITARY APPRECIATION DAY***

---

***Tuesday, November 9 at 7 p.m.  
Sanford Coyote Sports Center***



***VS.***



- 
- Two FREE Tickets for All Active Military Members and Veterans***
  - Discounted \$10 Tickets for Family Members***
    - In-Game Recognition***
  - Call 605-677-5959 to Redeem this Offer or GoYotes.com/Promo and enter the promo code USA***



# ***COYOTE MEN'S BASKETBALL MILITARY APPRECIATION DAY***

---

***Thursday, November 11 at 1:30 p.m.  
Sanford Pentagon in Sioux Falls***



***VS. AF***

- 
- Two FREE Tickets for All Active Military Members and Veterans***
  - Discounted \$10 Tickets for Family Members***
  - In-Game Recognition***
  - Call 605-312-7900 to Redeem this Offer or Visit the Sanford Pentagon Ticket Office***

# UPCOMING EVENTS

Oct 23—USD Coyote Football Military Appreciation Day—DakotaDome—Vermillion—1:00 pm (CT)  
Oct 23—Midwest Honor Flight Hangar Dance at the South Dakota Military Heritage Alliance (1600 W. Russell Street)—Sioux Falls  
Oct 27—Veterans Stand Down—Old High School Gym (301 S. Van Buren)—Winner—10:00 am—2:00 pm (CT)  
Nov 9—USD Coyote Women’s Basketball Military Appreciation Day—Sanford Coyote Sports Center—Vermillion—7:00 pm (CT)  
Nov 11—State Offices Closed  
Nov 11—Fallen Hero Bridge Dedication—SSG Gregory Wagner—Hanson High School (600 Juniper Street)—Alexandria—10:00 am (CT)  
Nov 11—USD Coyote Men’s Basketball Military Appreciation Day—Sanford Pentagon—Sioux Falls—1:30 pm (CT)  
Nov 13—Northern Hills Veterans Appreciation Fair—Sturgis Community Center (1401 Lazelle Street)—12:00—3:00 pm (MT)  
Nov 25-26—State Offices Closed  
Dec 7—Governor’s Budget Address  
Dec 18—Wreaths Across America—South Dakota Veterans Cemetery—Sioux Falls—11:00 am (CT)  
Dec 24—State Offices Closed  
Dec 31—State Offices Closed

## 2022

Jan 10—POW/MIA Chair of Honor Dedication—State Capitol—2:00 pm (CT)  
Jan 11—Governor’s State of the State Address  
Jan 12—SD Veterans Council/SDDVA Legislative Reception—RedRossa Italian Grille—Pierre—5:30—7:30 pm (CT)  
Jun 12—Midwest Honor Flight Annual Honor Ride  
Jul 18-23—National Veterans Golden Age Games—Sioux Falls  
Aug 15-18—SDDVA Annual CTVSO Benefit School

Audry Ricketts, Public Information Officer  
South Dakota Department of the Military <https://military.sd.gov/>  
South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs <https://vetaffairs.sd.gov>  
Soldiers and Sailors Building - 425 E Capitol Avenue  
Pierre, SD 57501  
Phone: 605-773-8242  
E-mail address: [audry.ricketts@state.sd.us](mailto:audry.ricketts@state.sd.us)

